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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft "settlement"

I remain appalled that that the DOJ has basically thrown in the towel concerning Microsoft. If this were a poker hand, it is as if DOJ had four aces and decided to fold.

Why am I so upset about Microsoft? There are way too many reasons to begin to detail them all. Let's just start with a few obvious(?) examples of the problems that Microsoft has created and continues to create.

First, Microsoft does not provide access to API information at an equal level to competing products. A prime example is Corel WordPerfect. That particular word processor program was written without access to a number of key APIs. Without those key APIs, functionality was compromised considerably. The purpose for withholding specific API information can only be assumed to be due to a matter of "controlling" competition. Since Microsoft can develop applications with closer connections to the operating system, they >appear< to be better products.

Second, in recent years, modems and printers have become specifically limited to being functional only with Microsoft. These devices are called winmodems and winprinters. They have had significant capability removed. In some cases, the price is not reduced to reflect the lower level of actual expense. Consumers pay for this redesign. I used to rally like USRobotics modems (now 3Com). Several months ago, I purchased a 56K modem. I was deeply disappointed to learn that it was a revision 3 modem. The revision 0 modem would have worked for me wonderfully, both with Windows and Linux. The revision 3 modem, on the other hand, only worked with Windows. The revision 3 modem was priced the same as the revision 0 modem. The manufacturer was thus able to generate substantially more revenue (potentially) from a given sale. I sent the crippled modem back to the company that I purchased the thing from. I was out the money for the return of the useless modem. There is no excuse for such deceptive tactics. The company itself provided literature that states a level of functionality that no longer existed. Since the operating system needed to provide support for this useless device, it is obvious that Microsoft "communicated" with this vendor on design objectives. Microsoft is able to control product design with the intent of minimizing competition VERY effectively.

An example of printer tampering works in the same manner. My aunt had to purchase a replacement printer. She was using a DOS application, at the time. The new printer, with a substantial price attached, no longer could print the simple text characters used by the DOS application. She was compelled to purchase new software, even though not needed, to use this lobotomized printer. My aunt at that time was on a fixed income and did not need the additional expense, but Microsoft and the printer company deserve

the additional revenue. At least, that is the thought I am left with by the withdrawal of DOJ involvement.

I can think of a large number of additional cases, with no difficulty at all. How fortunate for Microsoft that DOJ has given up, and indeed, apparently has no clue as to the true level of market manipulation exercised by Microsoft. During the 1930s, there was an investigation of Standard Oil. That company was broken up. When Standard Oil is compared to Microsoft, Standard Oil looks more like a mom and pop operation. Yet that company was broken up. Something is VERY wrong here. Just how many people have been bought off by Microsoft, anyway?

If that last question seems harsh, perhaps it should be seen that way. A lot of people have to left with that conclusion. It has been said many time that money talks. Microsoft is the proof.

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